

	The Lord Howe Island Stick Insect: an example of the benefits of captive management, <i>by Patrick Honan</i> .....	258
	The Hemiphlebia damselfly, <i>Hemiphlebia mirabilis</i> Sélys (Odonata, Zygoptera) as a flagship species for aquatic insect conservation in south-eastern Australia, <i>by TR New</i> .....	269
	Conservation of mayflies (Ephemeroptera) especially <i>Coloburiscoides</i> in the Victorian Alps: impediments and threats, <i>by PJ Suter and P McGuffie</i> .....	273
<b>Naturalist Notes</b>	More animals seen on Thryptomene, <i>by Virgil Hubregtse</i> .....	262
	Invertebrate herbivory of the Soft Tree-fern <i>Dicksonia antarctica</i> , <i>by Dustin Lehr, Jo North and Michelle Cathie</i> .....	265
<b>Book Reviews</b>	<i>A Guide to Australian Moths</i> by Paul Zborowski and Ted Edwards, <i>reviewed by Peter Marriott</i> .....	278
	<i>Melbourne's Wildlife: a field guide to the fauna of Greater Melbourne</i> by Museum Victoria, <i>reviewed by Ian Endersby</i> .....	280

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## From the Editors

Invertebrate species are vastly more numerous and incredibly more diverse than animals with backbones. As to the first, they make up about 95% of all known animal species. Perhaps because of the second, invertebrate species, particularly the insects, are of enormous importance to the earth's ecosystems. Pulitzer Prize-winning biologist EO Wilson has observed that 'If insects were to vanish, the environment would collapse into chaos.' This sentiment was echoed by David Attenborough in his recent natural history series *Life in the Undergrowth*.

Despite their numbers and importance, however, invertebrates generally receive far less attention than other animals, from both the nature-loving public and conservationists. Butterflies are perhaps the best-studied group of invertebrates, but the extent of attention focused on them is not matched in the case of most others of their kind. It seems the average fly (May-, Damsel- or otherwise) or stick insect does not rate well against the larger—and more readily apparent—mammal, bird, or even snake or lizard.

This Special Issue of *The Victorian Naturalist* collates contemporary conservation data on this somewhat neglected but vitally important range of species. The Editors are pleased, as ever, to provide this opportunity to focus on invertebrate conservation. The issue addresses questions related to invertebrates and their conservation, as well as providing a good summary of current conservation strategies applied to particular species. While the preparation of 'special' issues such as this involves some production difficulties, these are greatly outweighed by the value contained between the covers.

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**Front cover:** *Candalides absimilis* (female), a distinct form of this species found at Buchan and Mitchell River NP. Photo supplied by Ross Field.

**Back cover:** Gippsland Burrowing Crayfish. Photo by Greg Hollis, DSE Noojee.

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